Fly-by-night aviation clubs

4235. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Want a licence to fly? Shell out Rs. 19 lakh in Mumbai" which appeared in The Indian Express dated the 16th April, 2002;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether these fly-by-night aviation clubs are recognized by the States or the Central Government;

(d) whether these clubs have infrastructure for flying;

(e) if so, the details thereof;and

(f) if not, whether Government would ban such clubs which jeopardise the lives of trainees?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) A Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) has been issued under the provisions of Aircraft Rules, 1937 by Directorate General of Civil Aviation for approval of flying training institutes in the country. The CAR lays down the procedure and minimum requirements relating to infrastructure,procedures and manpower for grant of approval before undertaking flying training activities with aircraft having maximum certified take off mass not exceeding 5700 kgs. Approval is granted to only those flying clubs which meet these requirements.

Free journeys in IA/AI

4236. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines/Air India and other airlines, as a measure of incentive, have been allowing free journeys both on domestic as well as international routes;

(b) if so, what are the rules with regard to such free journeys where the original journeys are performed out of Government funds; and

(c) whether a Government official or any person entitled to travel for

official purpose can avail of the benefit of free journey for his or her personal journeys?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. It is a common practice for airlines world over to offer free-tickets for journeys under various schemes. Air India, Indian Airlines and Jet Airways etc. have also been offering free incentive tickets on domestic as well as international routes under their incentive schemes.

(b) and (c) There is no objection to availing of such free tickets earned under various schemes offered by the airlines, by any person travelling for official purpose out of Government funds.

Government officials can also accept the free tickets earned by them under such incentive schemes offered by any airline except in the case of "Free Companion Scheme", the availing of the facility is confined to national Carriers only.

High cost of domestic air travelling

4237. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that air travel from Delhi to Singapore and Hong Kong and other foreign destinations is cheaper than air travel in domestic circuit like Delhi to Trivandrum etc., which is affecting domestic tourism;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the measures taken/proposed to be taken to reduce the cost of domestic air travel;

(c) whether it is a fact that high rate of excise duty on aviation fuel is contributing to high cost of domestic travel;and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to reduce excise duty so as to reduce the cost of domestic air travel?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (d) Domestic air fares are not regulated by the Government. However, Domestic air fares on some sectors are high as compared to international fares due to short haul flights, more number of landings, Route Dispersal Guidelines, higher price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and high rate of Sales Tax on ATF levied by the State Governments.